GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:598
ANSWERED ON:21.10.2008
SMALL TEA GROWERS IN ASSAM
Acharia Shri Basudeb;Sarma Dr. Arun Kumar

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the contribution of small tea growers to the overall tea production in the country with special reference to Assam;

(b) the measures adopted by the Government to encourage small tea growers, particularly in Assam;

(c) the major constraints being faced by small tea growers in their rapid growth and sustenance; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to promote them?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

a) The contribution from small tea growers to the national tea production is around 250 million kgs and it accounts for nearly 25% of the all India tea production of which 10% is accounted for by small growers in Assam.

b) In order to harness the potential economic value of the small grower sector, the measures adopted by Government are aimed at improving their farm productivity and quality of their produce, and then providing them with a market access to ensure a reasonable return from their investments. Focused attention is being paid to organize the growers into Self Help Groups (SHG) and financial assistance is being extended to them for facilitating establishment of proper leaf collection systems, transport arrangements and establishing proper partnership arrangements with the quality tea processing factories.

c) The major constraints of small tea growers are small fragmented holdings scattered in remote areas, not having land ownership, not conversant with good agricultural practices and not having their own processing facility.

d) The Self Help Groups are provided with 100 % grant for setting up of leaf collection centers, storage godowns, purchasing leaf weighing scales, plastic crates/nylon leaf carry bags. Transport vehicles are provided at 50% of the cost. Each SHG is provided with a revolving fund @ Rs.10,000/ha for meeting the cost of field inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, sprayers etc. A special training on modern aspects of tea growing is organized for selected two members from each Self Help Groups who in turn on completion of the training are expected to impart training to other members of the SHG and also take care of the management of the tea area under the command of the SHG. Besides meeting the training fee and boarding and lodging cost, each trainee is provided with stipend @Rs.500 per month for next six months from the date of completion of the training.